January 2026

Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) Report

Raheen,
Athenry,
Co. Galway

ASH Ecology & Environmental

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

A Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) was undertaken by Ash Ecology & Environmental Ltd (AEE) on behalf of Galway County Council (GCC) for the proposed residential development of 28 no. two storey houses at Raheen, Athenry, Co. Galway, as shown in Figures 1 and 2. The proposed site layout with landscaping is shown in Figure 3a.

It provides information on, and assesses the potential for, the proposed development to impact on the Natura 2000 network (hereafter referred to as European sites).[1]

An AA is required if significant effects on European sites arising from a proposed development cannot be ruled out at the screening stage, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. It is the responsibility of the competent authority to make a decision as to whether or not the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on European sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Report was compiled as part of this application (AEE, January 2026) along with an Ecological Impact Assessment (AEE, January 2026) and should be read in conjunction with this report. The EIA Screening Report includes assessments of potential impacts on various environmental factors, including biodiversity, and outlines measures to minimise any identified risks.

1.2 Competency of Assessor

This report has been prepared by Aisling Walsh whose qualifications includes an MSc in Biodiversity and Conservation (TCD), B.Sc. (Hons) Zoology (NUIG), B.Sc. Applied and Aquatic Science (GMIT) along with a Certificate of Competence in Environmental Noise Measurement from the Institute of Acoustics. Aisling is the Managing Director of Ash Ecology & Environmental Ltd and has over 18 years of experience providing environmental consultancy and environmental assessment services. Aisling has written numerous Ecological Impact Assessments (EcIA),

[1] The Natura 2000 network is a European network of important ecological sites, as defined under Article 3 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, which comprises both special areas of conservation and special protection areas. Special conservation areas are sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I, and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, of the Habitats Directive, and are established under the Habitats Directive itself. Special protection areas are established under Article 4 of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC for the protection of endangered species of wild birds. The aim of the network is to aid the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

In Ireland these sites are designed as European sites - defined under the Planning Acts and/or the Birds and Habitats Regulations as (a) a candidate site of Community importance, (b) a site of Community importance, (c) a candidate special area of conservation, (d) a special area of conservation, (e) a candidate special protection area, or (f) a special protection area. They are commonly referred to in Ireland as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Stage I and Stage II Natura Impact Statements, Environmental Impact Assessments/Statements, Badger Surveys, Bat Surveys (Aisling is a Licensed Bat Ecologist) and Habitat Surveys. She has also provided input and reviewed Ecological and Environmental assessments for several EIS and EIAR and conducted numerous noise surveys for EPA licenced facilities. AEE is a Registered Practice of the CIEEM (see Appendix A).

1.3 Project Description

The proposed development is located at Raheen, Athenry, Co. Galway (see Figure 1). The existing site comprises unmanaged grassland habitat (see Figures 2 and 4). The project involves the construction of 28 no. two storey houses (see Figure 3a).

The development comprises:

- 28 no. two storey houses
- Associated infrastructure and services

The site is bounded by the L3103 road to the southwest, Gort Mhaoilir Road to the southeast, and the existing Gort Mhaoilir estate to the northeast. The site is in a suburban setting on the edge of Athenry town, with existing residential properties adjacent.

The project aims to provide residential accommodation to meet local housing needs while integrating with the existing urban fabric of Athenry.

The proposed development site measures approximately 1.0815ha.

The proposed development will connect to the existing foul water and surface water drainage systems in the area. For foul water drainage, the development will connect to the Athenry Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP D0193), which as of January 2026 was reported to be at 'Amber' capacity. A Confirmation for Feasibility of Connection Letter from Uisce Eireann is to be submitted with application documents.

The existing wastewater treatment system will be decommissioned by a licensed operator. The treatment tank will be emptied, cleaned, and removed from site. All waste materials will be disposed of by licensed operators to appropriate licensed waste facilities. The tank and pipework will be evaluated for re-use where possible; otherwise materials will be disposed of in accordance with waste management regulations.

It is proposed to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) features into the surface water management plan. These may include measures such as permeable paving, swales, or attenuation tanks to reduce and slow down runoff from the site. A proposed drainage layout plan is shown as Figure 3b which demonstrates compliance with best practice surface water management.

There will be the retention of existing mature trees with appropriate Root Protection Zones (RPZ) and the decommissioning of existing wastewater treatment system using best practice.

A Planning Stage Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be required prior to works for the main environmental management measures such as noise, dust, water pollution prevention, etc.

2.0 Methodology

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents, as relevant:

- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, September 2021)
- OPR Practice Note PN01. Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision)
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle (European Commission, 2000)
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2019)

The above-referenced guidance sets out a staged process for carrying out Appropriate Assessment. To determine if an Appropriate Assessment is required, documented screening is required. Screening identifies the potential for effects on the conservation objectives of European sites, if any, which would arise from a proposed plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects (i.e., likely significant effects). Significant effects on a European site are those that would undermine the conservation objectives supporting the favourable conservation condition of the Qualifying Interest (QI) habitats and/or the QI/Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species of a European site(s).

2.1 Desk Based Studies

A desk-based review of information sources was completed. Information contained on the websites of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) was reviewed.

The desktop data sources used to inform the assessment presented in this report are as follows (accessed in January 2026):

- Online data available on European sites and protected habitats/species as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including conservation objectives documents
- Online data available on protected species as held by the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) from www.biodiversityireland.ie
- Information on the surface water network and surface water quality in the area available from www.epa.ie

- Information on groundwater resources and groundwater quality in the area available from www.epa.ie and www.gsi.ie
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography available from www.osi.ie
- Information on the location, nature and design of the proposed development supplied by the applicant's design team
- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Athenry Local Area Plan 2024-2030

2.2 Habitat Survey

The site was visited 30th August 2025. Habitats were identified and classified according to Fossitt (2000)[2] and Smith *et al.* (2011)[3]. A habitat map is shown as Figure 4. Photos of the site are attached in Appendix B. The main habitats onsite were:

- Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2) – The dominant habitat covering most of the site, consisting of rank grassland vegetation typical of unmanaged fields. This habitat is of low ecological significance.
- Treeline (WL2) – Mature treeline along the southwest boundary adjacent to the L3103 road, containing several trees with features suitable for bat roosting including ivy cover, crevices and deadwood.
- Stone walls (BL1) – Old stone walls along the southwest boundary providing potential habitat for small mammals and invertebrates.
- Scrub (WS1) – Areas of encroaching scrub consisting primarily of bramble, gorse and young willow.
- Amenity grassland (GA2) – A narrow strip of managed grassland along the roadside boundary.
- Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3) – The existing wastewater treatment system scheduled for decommissioning, hardcore trackway, and boundary walls. These were of low ecological significance.

No High Risk Invasive species listed on the S.I. Regs 477 were noted onsite e.g. Japanese knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Indian Balsam.

2.3 Appropriate Assessment Methodology

2.3.1 Regulatory Context

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna better known as "The Habitats Directive" provides the framework for legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 of the Directive provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC which codified Directive 79/409/EEC) (better known as "The Birds Directive").

[2] Fossitt, J. (2000). A *Guide to Habitats in Ireland*. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.
[3] Smith, G.F., O'Donoghue, P., O'Hora, K. and Delaney, E. (2011) Best practice guidance for habitat survey and mapping. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.

Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public*".

The Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended, and the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. Part 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, outlines the requirements for screening for appropriate assessment and appropriate assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive require an Appropriate Assessment of plans and projects to prevent significant adverse effects on European conservation sites, also known as Natura 2000 sites. In this particular case the purpose of Appropriate Assessment is to assess the potential impacts of the proposed activities on the conservation objectives of European sites. The assessment will determine whether the plan would have significant adverse effects upon the integrity of each site in terms of its nature conservation objectives.

The integrity of the site has been defined as "the coherence of the site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was designated" (European Commission, 2018). Where negative effects are identified other options should be thoroughly examined to avoid any potential damaging effects prior to implementing the plan.

2.3.2 AA Process

The European Commission's Methodological Guidance (EC, 2021) recommends a 4 stage approach:

Stage 1: Screening Determining whether the plan 'either alone or in combination with other plans or projects' is likely to have a significant effect on a European site.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment Determining whether, in view of the site's conservation objectives, the plan 'either alone or in combination with other plans or projects' would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site. If not, the plan can proceed.

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions Where it has not been proven that measures considered will not avoid or mitigate the adverse effect on the Natura 2000 site, then an assessment of the alternatives will be required; and if none are acceptable then stage 4 is required to be considered.

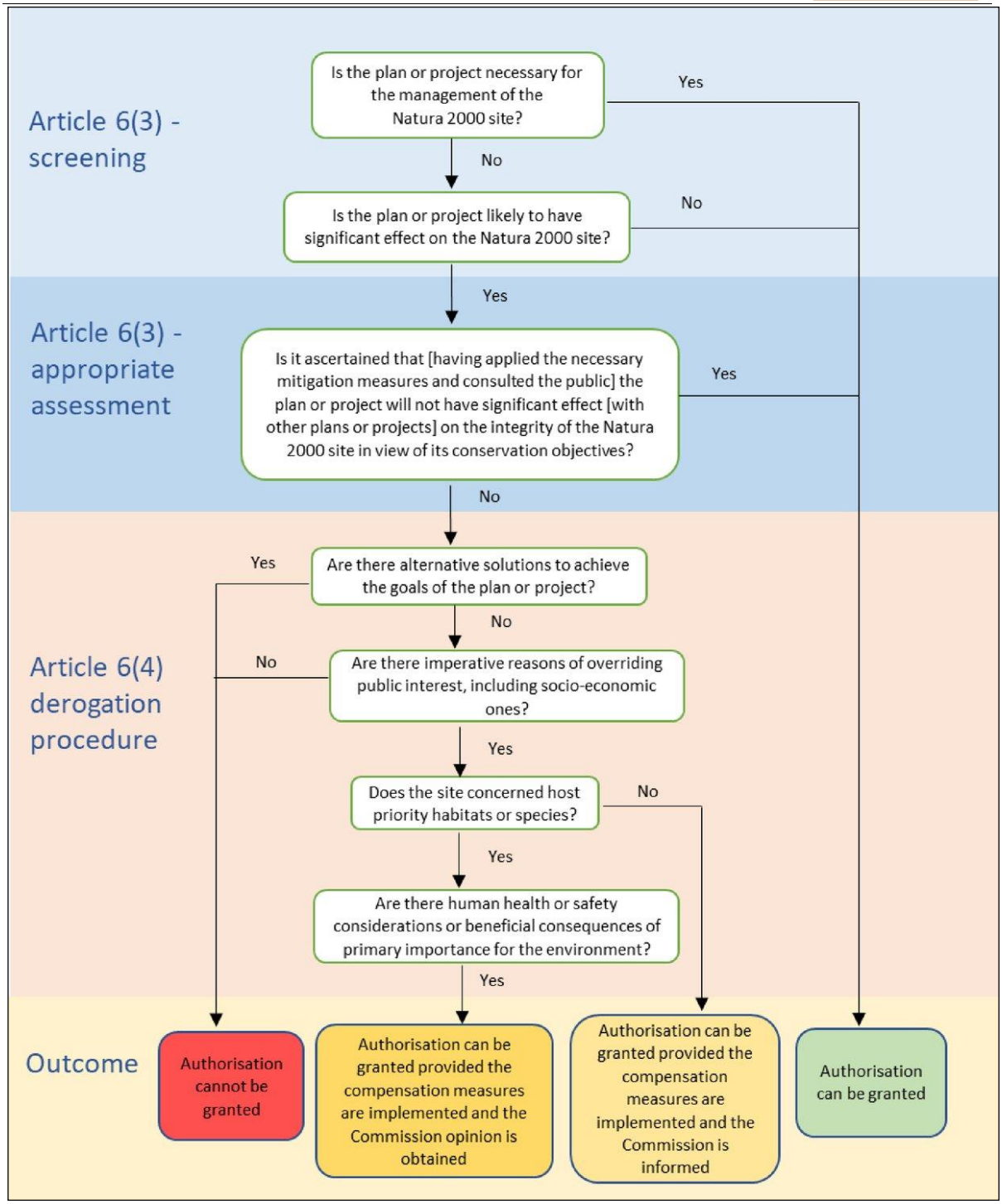
Stage 4: Assessment where no Alternative Solutions Exist & where Adverse Impacts Remain This will involve assessment where the Plan is considered to result in adverse impacts on the Natura 2000 site and no alternative solutions remain – the imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) test must be met before authorisation, permission or adoption of the Plan is agreed. This includes the agreement of compensatory measures.

This report covers Stage 1 of Appropriate Assessment - Screening. The outcome of each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. Screening for Appropriate Assessment involves the following steps:

1. Description of the project and local site characteristics
2. Identification of relevant European sites in the Zone of Influence
3. Assessment of likely effects - direct, indirect and cumulative
4. Screening statement and conclusions

The outcome of each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. Screening for Appropriate Assessment involves the following steps:[4]

[4] Figure 1 of Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, September 2021)


Article 6(3) - screening
Is the plan or project necessary for the management of the Natura 2000 site?
Yes
No
Is the plan or project likely to have significant effect on the Natura 2000 site?
No
Yes
Article 6(3) - appropriate assessment
Is it ascertained that [having applied the necessary mitigation measures and consulted the public] the plan or project will not have significant effect [with other plans or projects] on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives?
Yes
No
Article 6(4) derogation procedure
Yes
Are there alternative solutions to achieve the goals of the plan or project?
No
No
Are there imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including socio-economic ones?
Yes
Does the site concerned host priority habitats or species?
No
Yes
Are there human health or safety considerations or beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment?
Yes
Outcome
Authorisation cannot be granted
Authorisation can be granted provided the compensation measures are implemented and the Commission opinion is obtained
Authorisation can be granted provided the compensation measures are implemented and the Commission is informed
Authorisation can be granted

3.0 Stage I Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor Approach and Identification of Zone of Influence

In establishing which European sites are potentially at risk (in the absence of mitigation) from the proposed development, a source-pathway-receptor approach was applied. In order for an impact to occur, there must be a risk enabled by having a source (e.g. water abstraction or construction works), a receptor (e.g. a European site or its Qualifying Interest(s) (QIs) or Special Conservation Interest(s) (SCIs) species), and a pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. pathway by air for air borne pollution, or a pathway by a watercourse for mobilisation of pollution). For an impact to occur, all three elements must exist; the absence or removal of one of the elements means there is no possibility for the impact to occur.

The identification of source-pathway-receptor connection(s) between the proposed development and European sites essentially is the process of identifying which European sites are within the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed development, and therefore potentially at risk of significant effects. The ZoI is defined as the area within which the proposed development could affect the receiving environment such that it could potentially have significant effects on the QI habitats or QI/SCI species of a European site, or on the achievement of their conservation objectives (as defined in CIEEM, 2022).

The identification of a source-pathway-receptor risk does not automatically mean that significant effects will arise. The likelihood for significant effects will depend upon the characteristics of the source (e.g. extent and duration of construction works), the characteristics of the pathway (e.g. direction and strength of prevailing winds for air borne pollution) and the characteristics of the receptor (e.g. the sensitivities of the European site and its QIs/SCIs). However, identification of the risk does mean that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the significance of the effect depending upon the nature and exposure to the risk and the characteristics of the receptor. In this case, where uncertainty existed, the precautionary principle was applied.

3.2 Description of Relevant Receptor-Source-Pathway Connections between the proposed development site and European sites Identified

In accordance with the European Commission Methodological Guidance (EC, 2021), a list of Natura 2000 Sites that can be potentially affected by the proposed works has been compiled. Adopting the precautionary principle in identifying these sites, it has been decided to include all SACs (Special Areas of Conservation) and SPAs (Special Protection Areas) within 15km of the site. National Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed NHAs within 5km of the site are also considered, which are of national (NHA), or proposed (pNHA) national importance.

The nearest protected areas to the site are listed below in Table 1. Maps showing the 7 SAC sites and 3 SPA sites within a 15km radius of the site are shown as Figures 5 and 6. There are no (proposed) National Heritage Areas (pNHAs/NHAs) within 5km of the site, see Figure 7. The proposed works do not occur within a SAC, SPA or pNHA.

Table 1 European Sites within 15km of the Site

Code	Site Name	Approx. Distance (as the crow flies)	Screening Conclusion
SAC Sites (within 15km)			
000297	Lough Corrib SAC	7.6km NE, N, NW	Screened OUT. No hydrological connection. The site drains to Clarinbridge River (~800m away) which flows to Galway Bay, not to Lough Corrib. Distance of 7.6km exceeds any zone of influence for disturbance impacts.
000322	Rahasane Turlough SAC	7.6km S, SW	Screened OUT. No hydrological connection to turlough system. Site drains away from turlough catchment. Distance sufficient to preclude disturbance impacts.
000268	Galway Bay Complex SAC	9.8km SW	Screened OUT. While there is a distant hydrological connection via Clarinbridge River, the distance of ~10km downstream, dilution factors, and absence of direct impacts preclude any significant effects.
000242	Castletaylor Complex SAC	12.3km SW	Screened OUT. No pathway for impacts. Distance of 12.3km exceeds any zone of influence for the proposed development.
000606	Lough Fingall Complex SAC	13.6km SW	Screened OUT. No pathway for impacts. Distance of 13.6km exceeds any zone of influence for the proposed development.
001285	Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	14.2km SW	Screened OUT. No hydrological connection to turlough system. Distance precludes any impacts.
002244	Ardrahan Grassland SAC	14.6km SW	Screened OUT. No pathway for impacts. Distance of 14.6km exceeds any zone of influence for the proposed development.
SPA Sites (within 15km)			
004089	Rahasane Turlough SPA	7.6km S, SW	Screened OUT. No suitable habitat for SCI bird species (Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose, Golden Plover, Wigeon, Shoveler, Coot, Black-tailed Godwit, Black-headed Gull). Distance of 7.6km sufficient to preclude disturbance impacts. Habitat consists of modified grassland unsuitable for wetland birds.
004142	Cregganna Marsh SPA	11.2km SW	Screened OUT. No suitable habitat for Greenland White-fronted Goose. Distance of 11.2km precludes any disturbance impacts.
004042	Lough Corrib SPA	12km SW	Screened OUT. No suitable habitat for SCI bird species. Distance of 12km precludes any disturbance impacts.
pNHA Sites (within 5km)			
	None identified	N/A	No pNHA sites within 5km radius of the site.

The Source-Pathway-Receptor model has been applied to identify potential connections between the proposed development and European sites.

The sources of potential impacts from the proposed development include:

- Construction phase: earthworks, vegetation clearance, construction traffic, noise, dust, potential accidental spillages
- Operational phase: increased foul water loading, surface water runoff from hardstanding areas, residential activities

Potential pathways examined include:
- Surface water connections via drainage networks
- Groundwater connections
- Air (for emissions, dust, noise)
- Land (for mobile species)

The receptors are the qualifying interests and special conservation interests of European sites within the ZoI.

Surface Water Pathways

The site is located approximately 800m from the Clarinbridge River which flows southwest to Galway Bay. Surface water from the site would drain via the proposed SUDS system to the local surface water network and potentially reach the Clarinbridge River. However, the nearest European site with aquatic qualifying interests connected to this system is Galway Bay Complex SAC at 9.8km southwest. Given the distance, dilution factors, and the residential nature of the development, no significant effects are anticipated via this pathway.

Groundwater Pathways

The site overlies a locally important aquifer - bedrock which is moderately productive in local zones. However, there are no groundwater-dependent European sites within the ZoI that have hydrological connectivity with the site. The nearest turlough SACs (Rahasane at 7.6km and Kiltiernan at 14.2km) are in separate groundwater catchments with no connection to the development site.

Air Pathways

Potential air quality impacts during construction (dust, emissions) would be highly localised and temporary. The nearest European site is 7.6km away, far beyond the range of any air quality impacts from construction activities.

Land Pathways

The site consists of modified grassland habitat of low ecological value. It does not support any Annex species or provide suitable habitat for SCI bird species from nearby SPAs. The distance to the nearest European site (7.6km) precludes any disturbance impacts to qualifying species.

3.3 European Sites within the Zone of Influence

Based on the Source-Pathway-Receptor assessment, no European sites fall within the actual Zone of Influence of the proposed development. While 7 SACs and 3 SPAs occur within the precautionary 15km search radius, none have credible impact pathways from the proposed development that could result in significant effects on their qualifying interests or conservation objectives.

4.0 Screening Assessment of Likely Effects

As the proposed development does not overlap with any European sites, none of the qualifying interest habitats or species will be directly impacted. The habitat onsite would not support any Annex II species from nearby SACs. All European sites lie beyond the ZoI of any hydrogeological, air quality or disturbance/displacement impacts.

Given that all European sites are screened out (see Table 1), there are no indirect impacts by which the proposed development could potentially affect the conservation objective attributes and targets supporting the conservation condition of the qualifying interests of any European site. Nevertheless, a precautionary assessment of potential impact pathways is provided below.

A number of factors were examined at this stage and dismissed as not relevant given the absence of pathways to European sites.

4.1 Habitat Loss/Alteration

As there will be no direct habitat loss of any SAC & SPA sites listed in Table 1, impacts arising from habitat loss/alteration on these protected areas are screened out.

4.2 Disturbance and/or Displacement of Species

4.2.1 Direct Impacts

There will be no direct disturbance impacts on any European sites as the proposed development is located 7.6km from the nearest European site (Rahasane Turlough SAC/SPA) and does not overlap with any European site boundaries.

4.2.2 Indirect Impacts

Disturbance and displacement of fauna species as a result of construction related disturbance could potentially occur within the vicinity of the proposed works. For mammal species such as otter and badger, disturbance effects would not be expected to extend beyond 250m[5]. For birds, disturbance effects would not be

[5] This is consistent with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) guidance (Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes and Guidelines for the Treatment of Badgers prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes) documents. This is a precautionary distance, and likely to be moderated by the screening effect provided by surrounding vegetation and buildings, with the actual ZoI of construction related disturbance likely to be much less in reality.

expected to extend beyond a distance of c.300m, as noise levels associated with general construction activities would attenuate to close to background levels.

The proposed works are approximately 800m from the Clarinbridge River and 7.6km from the nearest European site. At these distances, disturbance impacts to any Annex II species or SCI birds are not credible. The site consists of modified grassland habitat which does not support ex-situ populations of SCI birds from nearby SPAs (Rahasane Turlough, Cregganna Marsh, Lough Corrib) as it lacks suitable wetland habitat required by species such as Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose, or other waterfowl.

Of particular relevance to Lough Corrib SAC is the Lesser Horseshoe Bat, a qualifying interest species. Desktop review indicates the closest Lesser Horseshoe Bat records are approximately 5.7-5.9km southwest of the site (Figure 7), which is outside the typical 2.5km foraging and commuting radius for this species. Given this distance and the absence of suitable roosting structures on site, the development is unlikely to impact Lesser Horseshoe Bat populations associated with Lough Corrib SAC.

Construction activities will generate temporary noise and visual disturbance. However, the nearest European site is 7.6km away, far beyond the distance at which construction disturbance could affect any qualifying species. Construction works will take place during normal daytime hours, further limiting any potential for disturbance to crepuscular or nocturnal species.

During the operational phase, the residential nature of the development (28 no. two storey houses on 1.0815ha) will generate typical suburban activity levels consistent with the existing adjacent residential areas. This will not result in disturbance impacts to European sites given the substantial distances involved.

Disturbance to features of interest of all European sites is screened out.

4.3 Habitat/Species Fragmentation

Habitat fragmentation has been defined as the 'reduction and isolation of patches of natural environment' usually due to an external disturbance such that an alteration of the spatial composition of a habitat occurs that alters the habitat and 'create[s] isolated or tenuously connected patches of the original habitat.' This results in spatial separation of habitat units which had previously been in a state of greater continuity.

The development site does not function as an ecological corridor between European sites, nor does it support habitats or species that are functionally linked to any European site. The nearest European sites are isolated from the development by existing urban development, road infrastructure, and agricultural lands.
It is considered that habitat fragmentation of qualifying habitats will not arise from the proposed works and impacts to all European sites are therefore screened out.

4.4 Changes in Population Density

It is not expected that the proposed works will cause any reduction in the baseline population of any qualifying species of European sites within 15km. The site does not

support Annex II species or SCI birds, and the distance to European sites precludes any population-level effects. This impact pathway is therefore screened out.

4.5 Impacts to Water Quality

4.5.1 Direct Impacts

There will be no direct impacts to water quality within any European site as the development does not occur within or immediately adjacent to any European site boundary.

4.5.2 Indirect Impacts

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is a key initiative aimed at improving water quality throughout the European Union. It requires member states to assess, monitor, and manage their water bodies to ensure that they achieve at least 'Good' ecological status. In Ireland, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for assessing and reporting on the status of water bodies in line with the WFD.

The WFD classification system assesses the ecological and chemical status of water bodies using a variety of parameters, including biological quality elements (such as fish, invertebrates, and aquatic flora), physico-chemical elements (such as temperature, oxygen, and nutrient conditions), and hydromorphological elements (such as flow and habitat conditions). The classification ranges from 'High' to 'Bad' status, with the objective being to achieve at least 'Good' status for all water bodies. The hydrology of the water catchment area is shown on Figure 8. The site is located within:

- Hydrometric Area '29 – Galway Bay South East
- WFD Catchment 'Corrib'
- WFD Subcatchment 'Clarinbridge_SC_010'
- The Clarinbridge River (approximately 800m from site) has a 2016-2021 WFD Status of 'Moderate' and is 'At Risk'
- 2016-2021 WFD Groundwater Body Status is 'Good' and 'Not at Risk'

4.5.3 Surface and Foul Drainage

The potential risk to water quality during the construction phase of the proposed works (e.g. silt and harmful substances becoming entrained in surface water run-off) is minimal given standard construction management practices will be implemented through the CEMP. The nearest hydrological connection is the Clarinbridge River at approximately 800m, with the nearest European site with aquatic qualifying interests (Galway Bay Complex SAC) located approximately 10km downstream.

Foul water from the proposed development will connect to the existing foul water network and be treated at Athenry Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP D0193), which has 'Amber' capacity status as of January 2026. A confirmation of feasibility letter from Uisce Éireann has been sought and is included with the application documents to confirm available capacity for the proposed development.

Surface water from roofs, hardstandings, roads and footpaths will be managed through SUDS features before discharge to the local drainage network. The Proposed Drainage Layout is shown as Figure 3b.

Given the distance to European sites (nearest 7.6km), the implementation of SUDS, connection to a WWTP with adequate capacity, and the dilution factors involved, negative impacts to water quality within any European site are screened out.

4.6 Climate Change Impacts

The proposed housing development will not result in any significant greenhouse gas emissions to the air during the operational phase. While there may be a temporary and localised increase in emissions during the construction activities, the small scale and short duration of the works render these emissions negligible. Considering the limited scope of the development (28 no. two storey houses), it is concluded that the proposed works will not have any discernible negative climate change impacts on the qualifying interests (QIs) or special conservation interests (SCIs) of any European site. Therefore, the potential for climate change impacts affecting European sites, resulting from the proposed works can be screened out.

5.0 In Combination Effects of Plans & Projects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or programmes that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to adversely impact upon European sites.

All European sites within 15km have been screened out in Section 4.0, with the nearest site (Rahasane Turlough SAC/SPA) located 7.6km from the proposed development. Given the absence of impact pathways, the distance to European sites, and the lack of direct connections to any European sites, there is no potential for any other plans or projects to act in combination with the proposed works which would adversely affect the integrity of any European sites.

Key plans and projects considered include:

- Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Athenry Local Area Plan 2019-2025
- Other permitted and proposed developments in the Athenry area

Galway County Council assesses each planning application requiring a Screening for Appropriate Assessment on an individual basis and requests further information accordingly depending on scale and location of development.

6.0 Screening Statement Conclusions

According to NPWS (2009), the Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise can either identify that an Appropriate Assessment is not required; or that there is no potential for significant effects (i.e. Appropriate Assessment is not required); or that significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain (i.e. the project must either proceed to Stage 2 (AA) or be rejected).

All European sites within 15km of the proposed development have been assessed for potential impacts. The nearest European site, Rahasane Turlough SAC/SPA at 7.6km, along with all other sites identified, were assessed for impacts from the proposed works and all impacts were screened out.

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information including, in particular, the nature of the proposed works and the likelihood of significant effects on any European site, in addition to considering possible in-combination effects, and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the author of this report that, on the basis of objective information, the possibility may be excluded that the proposed works will have a significant effect on any of the European sites below:

- Lough Corrib SAC
- Rahasane Turlough SAC
- Galway Bay Complex SAC
- Castletaylor Complex SAC
- Lough Fingall Complex SAC
- Kiltiernan Turlough SAC
- Ardrahan Grassland SAC
- Rahasane Turlough SPA
- Cregganna Marsh SPA
- Lough Corrib SPA

It is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Site as a result of the proposed works. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required.

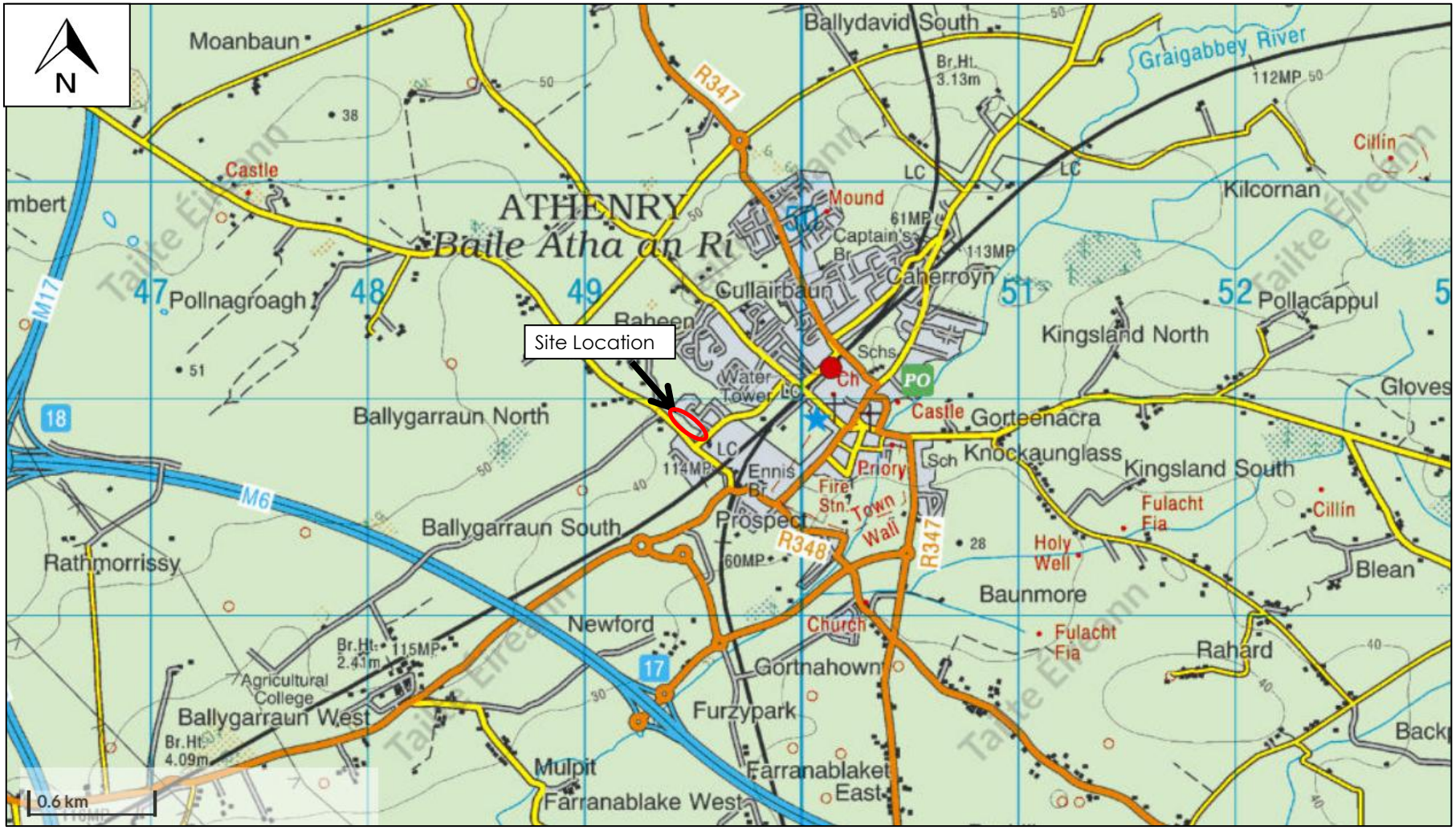
The FONSE table (Table 2) summarises the key assessment findings.

Table 2 Finding of No Significant Effect (FONSE) Statement

Aspect	Details
Project Description	Construction of 28 no. two storey houses and all associated site development works and infrastructure provision at Raheen, Athenry, Co. Galway
European Site(s) Assessed	Lough Corrib SAC (7.6km); Rahasane Turlough SAC (7.6km); Galway Bay Complex SAC (9.8km); Castletaylor Complex SAC (12.3km); Lough Fingall Complex SAC (13.6km); Kiltiernan Turlough SAC (14.2km); Ardrahan

Aspect	Details
	Grassland SAC (14.6km); Rahasane Turlough SPA (7.6km); Cregganna Marsh SPA (11.2km); Lough Corrib SPA (12km)
Qualifying Interests	No impacts anticipated on any qualifying interests or conservation objectives
Potential Impact Pathways	Distant hydrological pathway via surface water drainage to Clarinbridge River (~800m) and subsequently to Galway Bay (~10km). No credible pathways identified to any European sites.
Direct Effects	No direct effects identified - site outside all European sites
Indirect Effects	No indirect effects anticipated due to distance from European sites (nearest 7.6km), absence of suitable habitat for Annex/SCI species, connection to Athenry WWTP, implementation of SUDS and CEMP
Cumulative Effects	No significant in-combination effects identified with other developments in the Athenry area
Mitigation Required	Standard construction environmental controls through CEMP including pollution prevention measures
Residual Risk	None identified
Conclusion	No Significant Effects
NIS Required	No

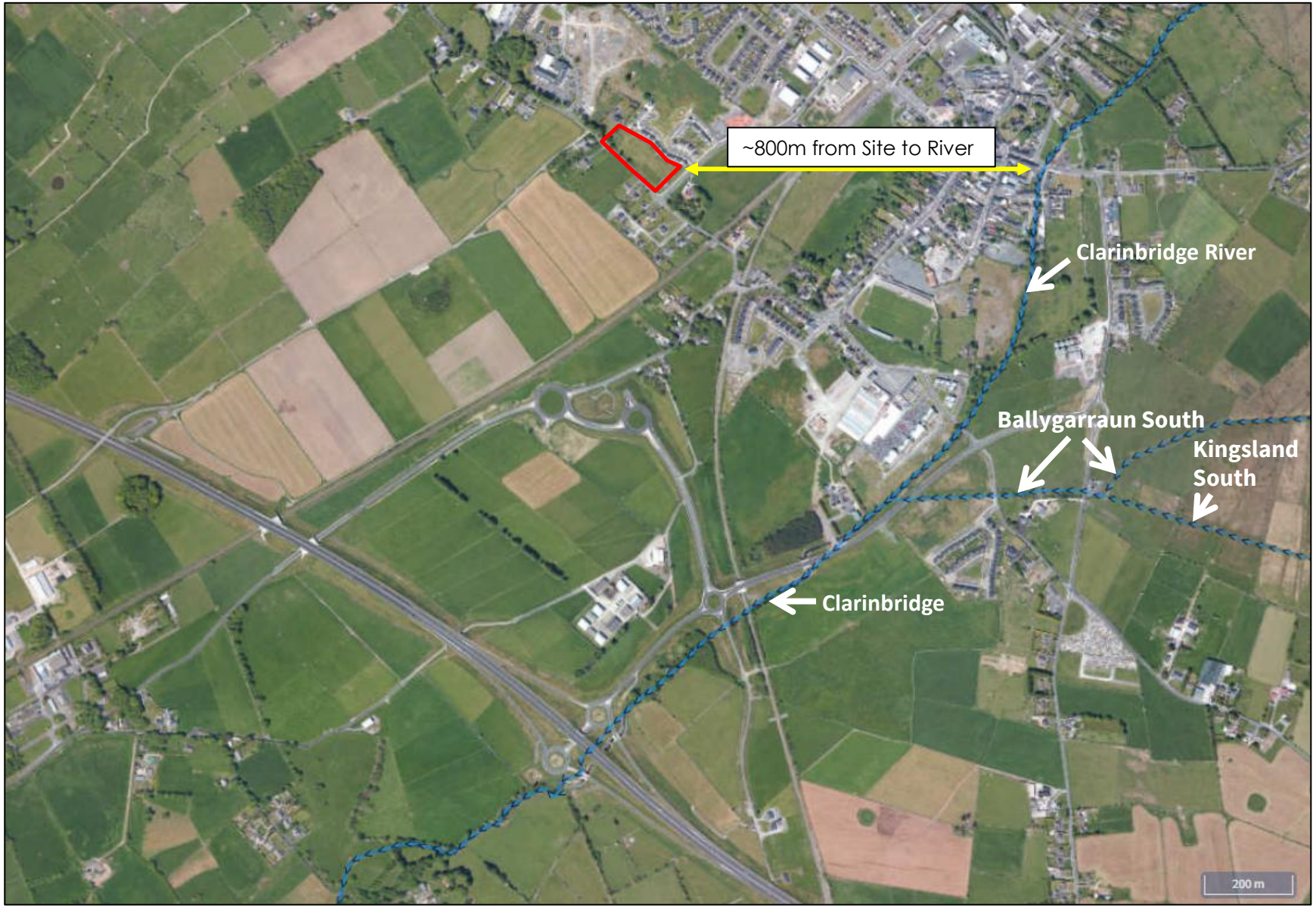
FIGURES



Map sourced from National Biodiversity Data Centre Website – www.nbdc.ie

M42

Client: Galway County Council			Drawing: Site Location Map			
Job: AA Screening Report						
	Drawing Number: Figure 1	Status: Final	Sht. Size: A4	Scale: As Shown	Date: Jan 26	Drawn: AW

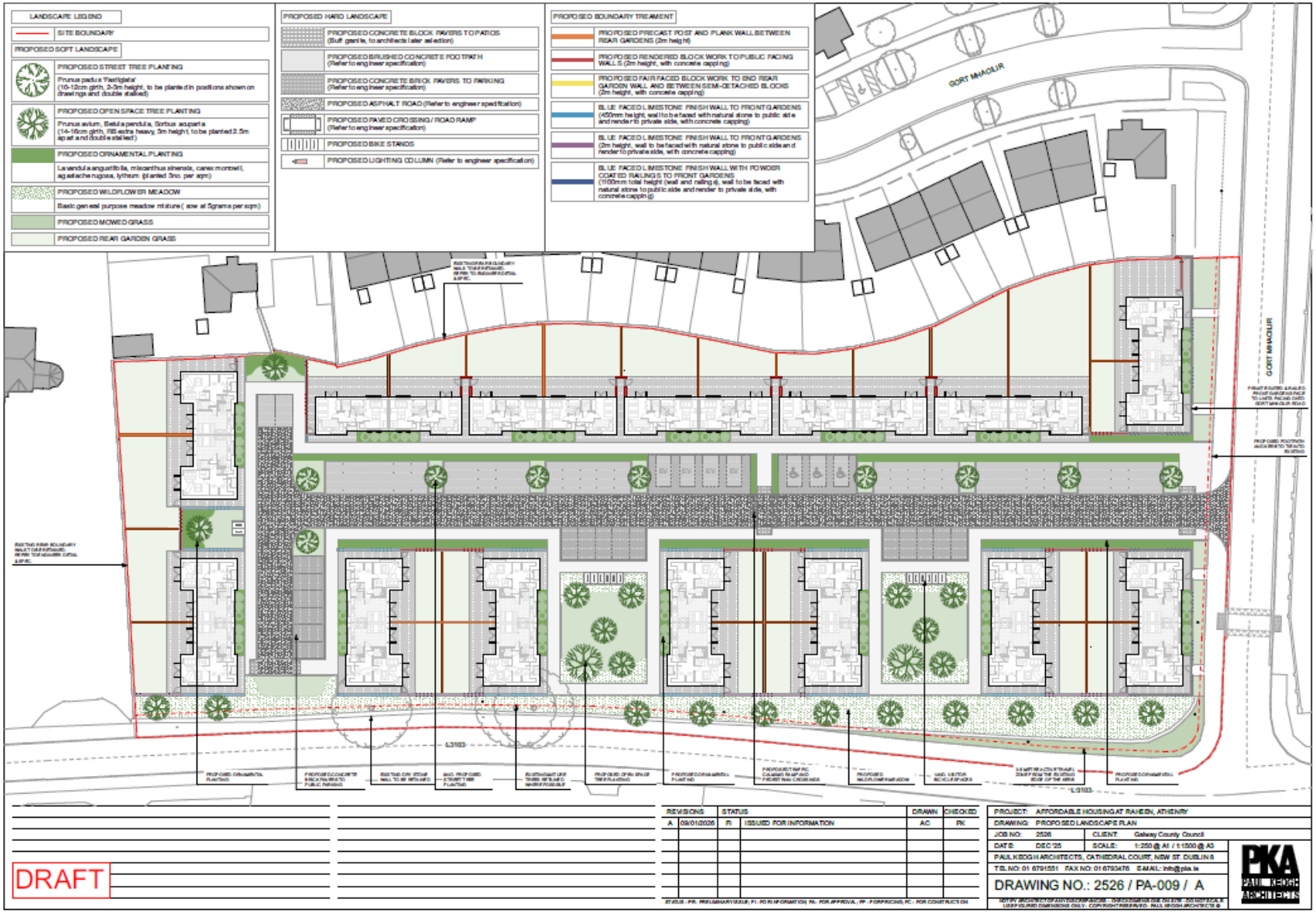


Site Location

Rivers

N

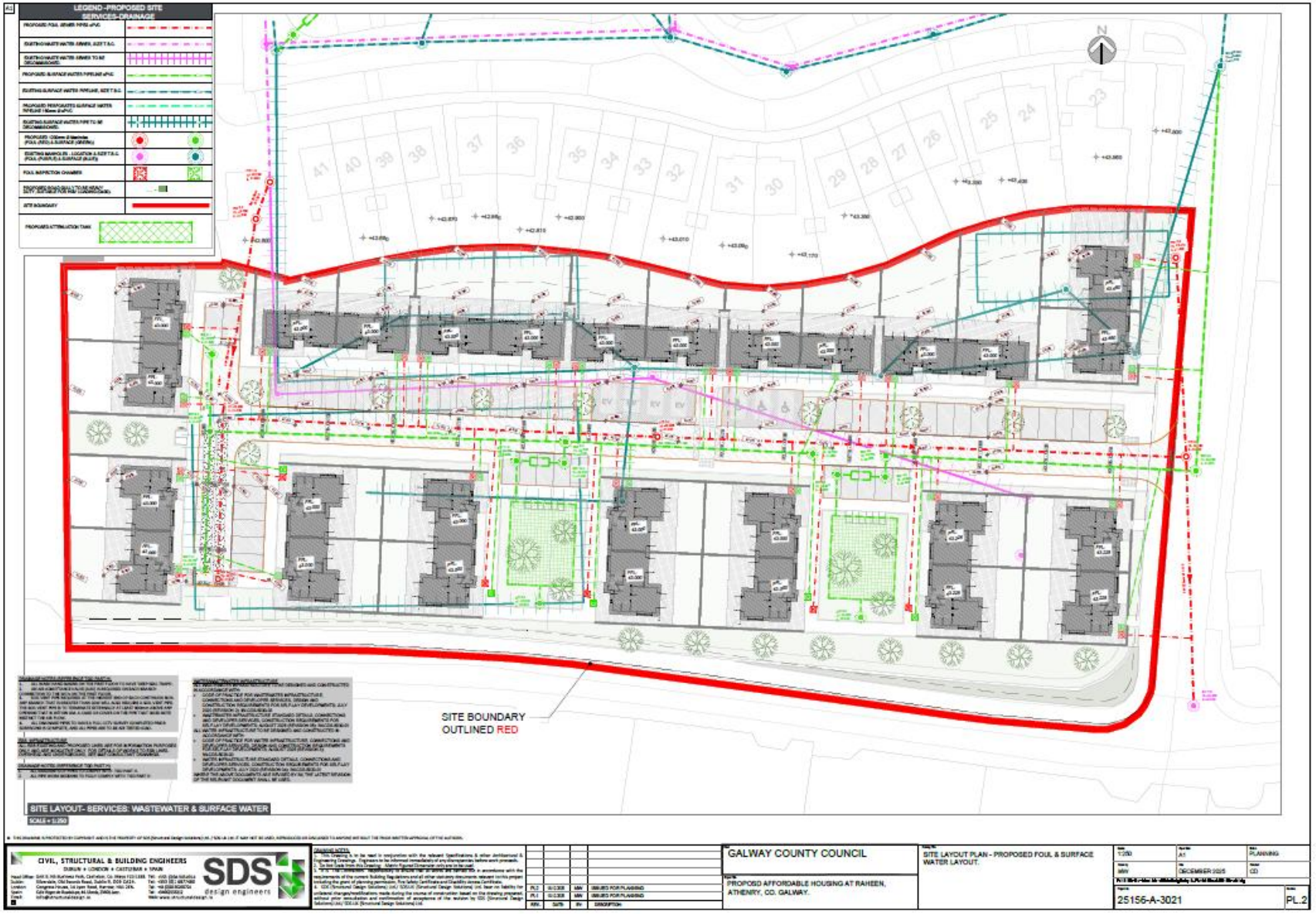
Client: Galway County Council			Drawing: Aerial Photo & Drainage Network			
Job: AA Screening Report						
	Drawing Number: Figure 2	Status: Final	Sht. Size: A4	Scale: As Shown	Date: Jan 26	Drawn: AW



Site Boundary

Client	Drawing
Galway County Council	Proposed Site and Landscaping Layout
Job AA Screening Report	

Drawing Number	Status	Sht. Size	Scale	Date	Drawn
Figure 3a	Final	A4	As Shown	Jan 26	AW



CIVIL, STRUCTURAL & BUILDING ENGINEERS
DUBLIN + LONDON + CASTLEBAR + SPAIN
SDS design engineers

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT RAHEEN, ATHENRY, CO. GALWAY.

SITE LAYOUT PLAN - PROPOSED FOUL & SURFACE WATER LAYOUT.

1:250 | A1 | PLANNING | DECEMBER 2025 | CD

25156-A-3021 | PL.2

Site Boundary

Client	Drawing
Galway County Council	Proposed Drainage Layout
Job: AA Screening Report	

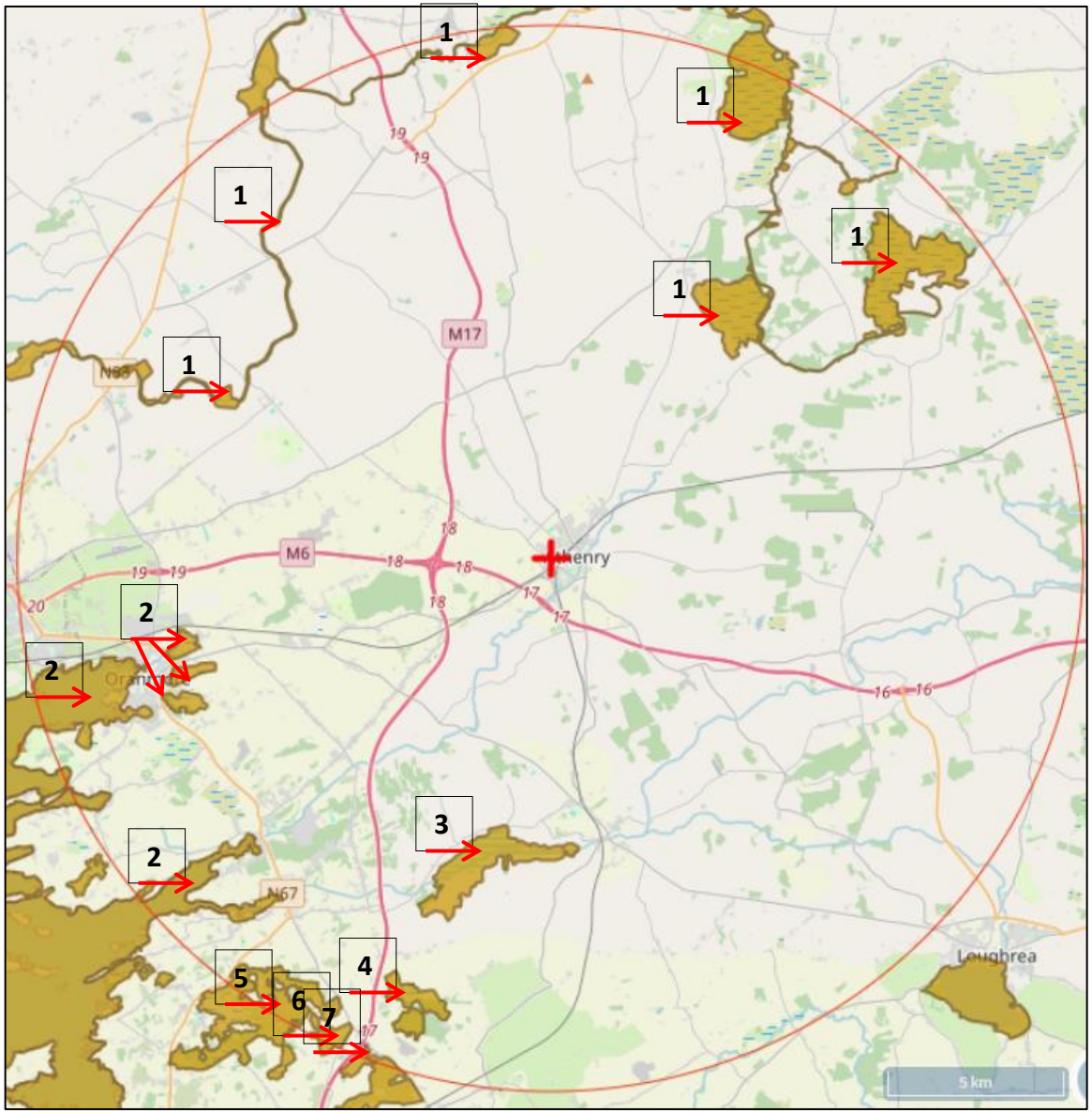
Drawing Number	Status	Sht. Size	Scale	Date	Drawn
Figure 3b	Final	A4	As Shown	Jan 26	AW

- Approx. Site Boundary
- Grassy Medows (GS2)
- Intermittent Treeline with Old Stone Wall (WL2/BL1)
- Hedgerow (WL1)
- Scrub (WS1)
- Amenity Grassland (GA2)
- Palisade Fencing
- Walls, Old WWTS and Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)

N

Client: Galway County Council	Drawing: Habitat Map
Job: AA Screening Report	

Drawing Number	Status	Sht. Size	Scale	Date	Drawn
Figure 4	Final	A4	As Shown	Jan 26	AW



No.	Site Code	Name	Distance
1	000297	Lough Corrib SAC	7.6km NE, N, NW
2	000268	Galway Bay Complex SAC	9.8km SW
3	000322	Rahasane Turlough SAC	7.6km S, SW
4	000242	Castletaylor Complex SAC	12.3km SW
5	000606	Lough Fingall Complex SAC	13.6km SW
6	001285	Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	14.2km SW
7	002244	Ardrahan Grassland SAC	14.6km SW

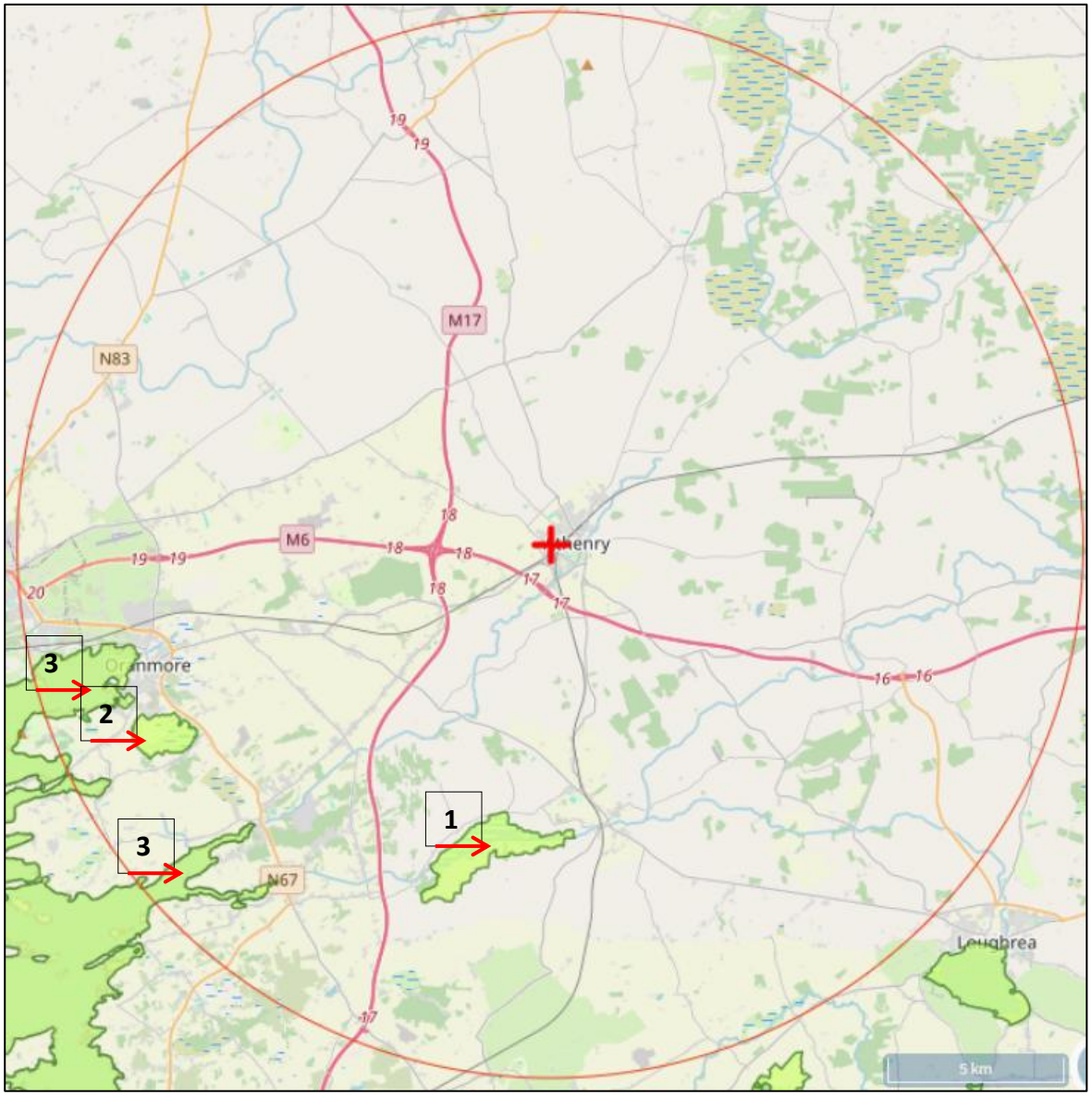
Special Area of Conservation

Site Location

N

Client: Galway County Council	Drawing: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 15km of Site
Job: AA Screening Report	

Drawing Number	Status	Sht. Size	Scale	Date	Drawn
Figure 5	Final	A4	As Shown	Jan 26	AW



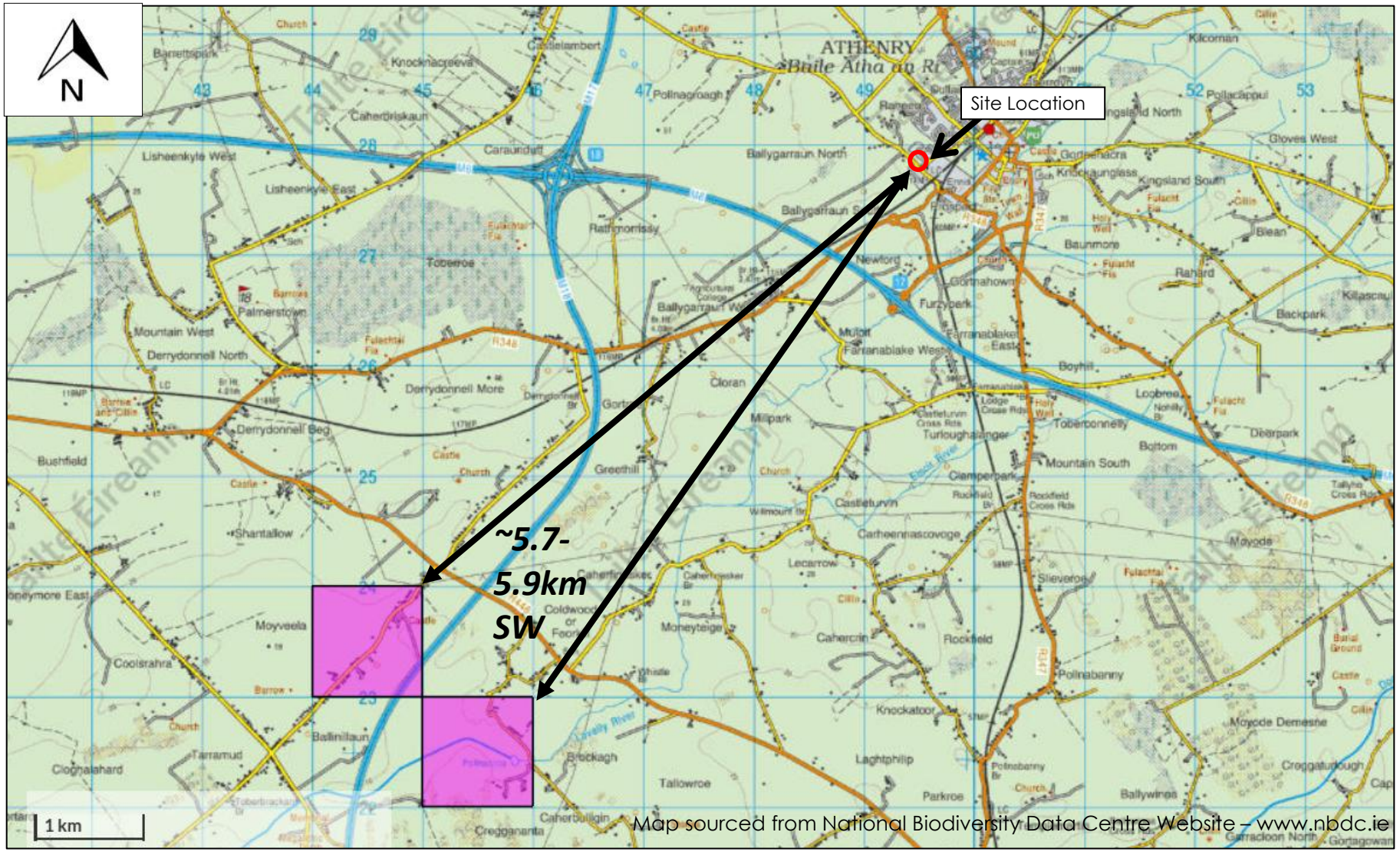
No.	Site Code	Name	Distance (km)
1	004089	Rahasane Turlough SPA	7.6km S, SW
2	004142	Cregganna Marsh SPA	11.2km SW
3	004042	Lough Corrib SPA	12km SW

Special Protection Area

Site Location

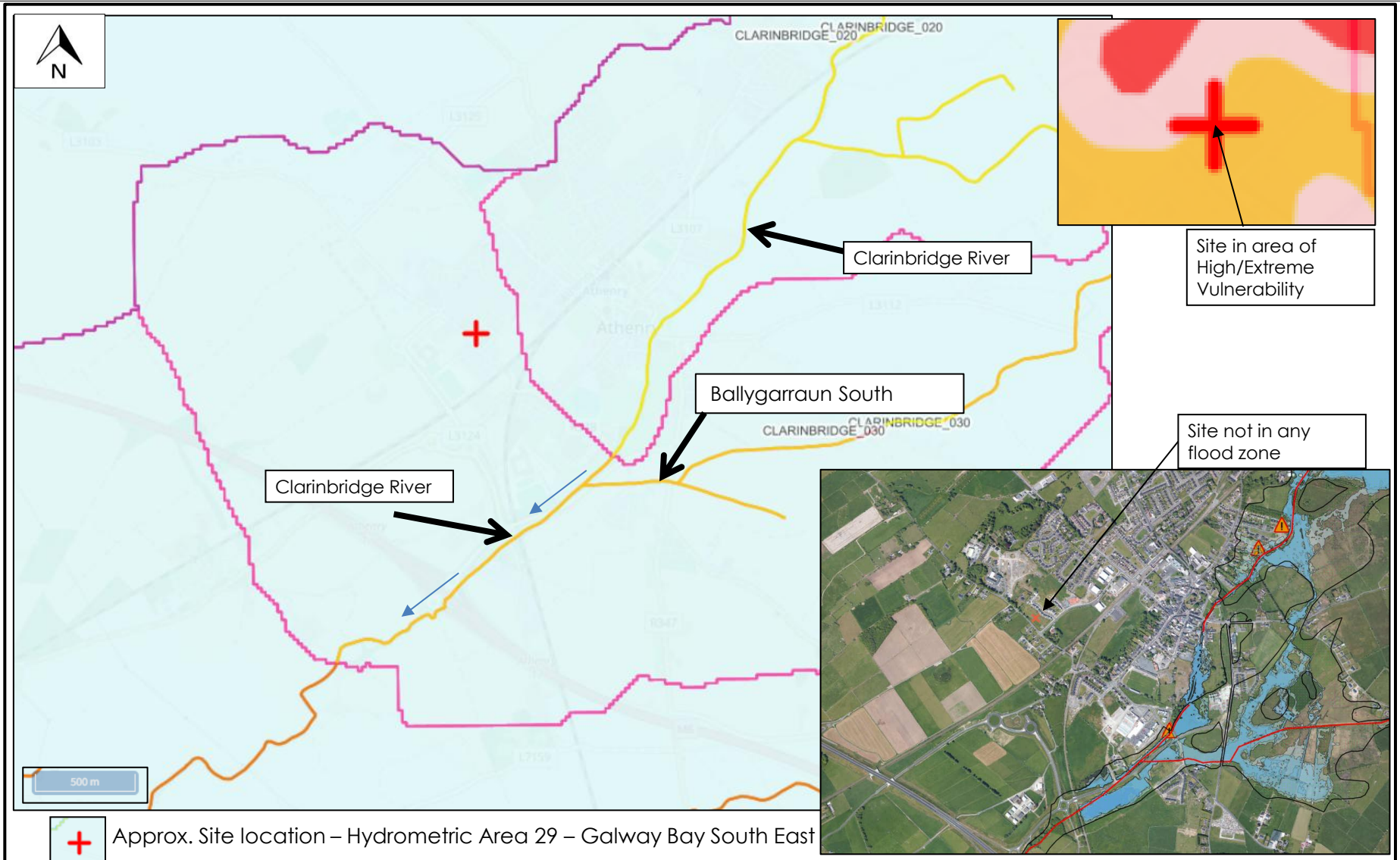
N

Client Galway County Council			**Drawing** Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within 15km of Site			
Job AA Screening Report						
Drawing Number Figure 6	Status Final	Sht. Size A4	Scale As Shown	Date Jan 26	Drawn AW	



Lesser horseshoe bat records approx. 5.7-5.9km SW of site. Outside the ~2.5km foraging and commuting radius. Unlikely to use site.

Client: Galway County Council			Drawing: Closest Lesser Horseshoe Bat Records			
Job: AA Screening Report						
	Drawing Number: Figure 7	Status: Final	Sht. Size: A4	Scale: As Shown	Date: Jan 26	Drawn: AW



Approx. Site location – Hydrometric Area 29 – Galway Bay South East

Site within the WFD Sub-Catchment 'Clarinbridge_SC_010' and River Sub-Basin 'CLARINBRIDGE_030'
Water Framework Directive River Waterbody Status 2016-2021 'CLARINBRIDGE_030' is 'Moderate'
River Waterbodies Risk 2016-2021 of 'CLARINBRIDGE_030' is 'At Risk'
WFD Groundwater Body Status 2016-2021 of 'Clarinbridge' is 'Good' and 'Not at Risk'

Client: Galway County Council					Drawing: 2016-2021 WFD Catchment Drainage Information	
Job: AA Screening Report						
	Drawing Number: Figure 8	Status: Final	Sht. Size: A4	Scale: As Shown	Date: Jan 26	Drawn: AW

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Registered Practices Certificate
April 2025—March 2026

ASH Ecology and Environmental Ltd

has been admitted as a Registered Practice
of the

Chartered Institute of Ecology

and Environmental Management

on the 1st day of April 2025

Penny Lewns CEcol CEnv MCIEEM
President

1st April 2025

This certificate remains the property of CIEEM. Membership is subject to annual renewal and may be authenticated by contacting CIEEM at the registered address. Company no. RC000861.
Registered Charity Number (England and Wales): 1189915.
Registered address: Grosvenor Court, Ampfield Hill, Ampfield, Romsey, SO51 9BD United Kingdom.

APPENDIX B

Plate 1: Overview of the site showing the dominant habitat of dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2) with rank grassland vegetation typical of unmanaged fields.

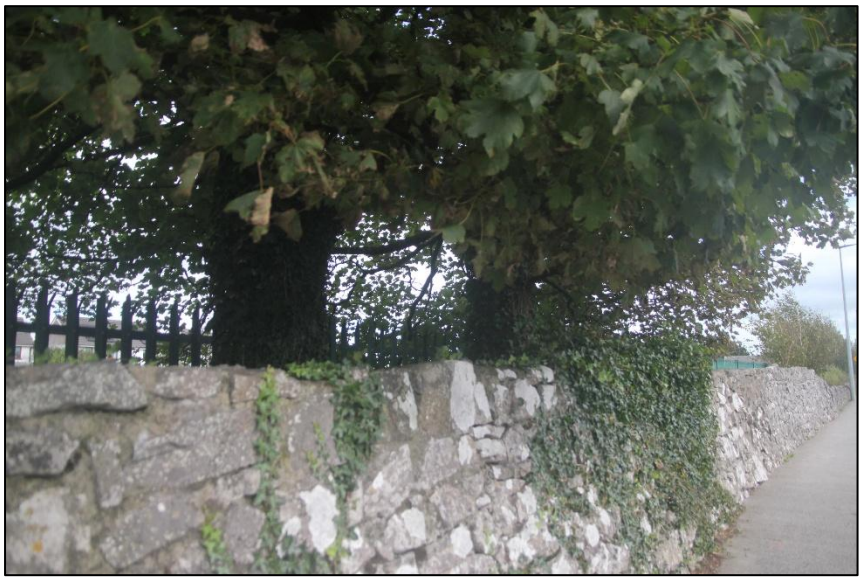


Plate 2: Southwest boundary featuring mature treeline (WL2) with old stone wall (BL1) along the L3103 road. Several trees display features suitable for bat roosting.

Plate 3: Treeline of smaller trees (WL2), Old stone wall (BL1) and Amenity Grassland strip (GA2) along the southwest boundary roadside.

Plate 4: Mature trees within the southwest boundary treeline showing potential bat roost features including ivy cover, crevices and deadwood suitable for crevice-dwelling species.

Plate 5: Scrub habitat (WS1) encroaching into the grassland areas, consisting primarily of bramble, gorse and young willow.

Plate 6: Southeast boundary showing palisade fencing along Gort Mhaoilir Road with rank grassland habitat extending to the boundary.

Plate 7: Location of existing wastewater treatment system showing grassy depression beneath hardcore trackway, scheduled for decommissioning.

Plate 8: Northeast boundary adjacent to existing Gort Mhaoilir estate showing block walls and existing housing beyond (BL3).